

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

UNCLAS STATE 179553

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 179553 ACTION DACCA 15 AUGUST.

QUOTE

UNCLAS STATE 179553

E.O. 11652:

TAGS: EAID,

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL REACTION TO BANGLADESH FLOODS

FOLLOWING FOR EMBASSY'S INFORMATION ARE SUMMARIES OF MAJOR STATEMENTS MADE IN CONGRESS SO FAR CONCERNING BANGLADESH FLOODS.

A. AUGUST 8, SENATOR KENNEDY - NEARLY ALL PARTS OF BD AFFECTED BY FLOOD, WITH PERHAPS AS MANY AS 20 MILLION FLOOD REFUGEES. DISEASE THREAT IS SERIOUS. WHILE AVAILABLE DATA IS SOMEWHAT CONFLICTING BECAUSE RETURNS ARE NOT ALL IN, FOLLOWING POINTS CAN BE MADE.

--FLOODING IS FAR WORSE THAN NORMAL, AN ASSESSMENT CONFIRMED IN REPORTS RECEIVED BY DEPARTMENT OF STATE;

--MILLIONS ARE IN NEED OF EMERGENCY RELIEF IN FORM OF MEDICINES, TEMPORARY SHELTER, ETC.

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--BDG HAS CLEARLY STATED ITS EMERGENCY NEED AND HAS

APPEALED BROADLY FOR HELP, INCLUDING TO THE USG.

IN VIEW OF FOREGOING, KENNEDY URGED ADMINISTRATION TO ACT
WITHOUT DELAY. IF ADDITIONAL FUNDS ARE NEEDED, ADMIN

SHOULD REQUEST THEM FROM CONGRESS, IN ADDITION TO RELIEF
SUPPLIES, PERHAPS USG COULD MAKE BOATS, HELICOPTERS AND
OTHER EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE FROM STOCKS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

B. AUGUST 8, SENATOR FONG - AFTER REVIEWING THE LONGEVITY
AND SEVERITY OF THE BANGLADESH DISASTER IN TERMS EVEN MORE
STARK THAN THE FOREGOING, FONG ADDED: BEGIN QUOTE AND THE
UNITED STATES HAS GIVEN DOLS. 25,000 AND TWO MONTHS OF
SUFFERING IS BEING ASSESSED; END QUOTE. HE THEN CON-
TRASTED THIS WITH THE ESTIMATED COST OF DOLS. 877,000
FOR THE CYPRUS AIRLIFT ANNOUNCED BY FDRC SAME DAY.
DEPARTMENT OF STATE IS AWARE OF SERIOUS FLOOD SITUATION,
AND SERIOUS CONDITION OF BD ECONOMY AND ITS NEED FOR
PL 480 FOOD ASSISTANCE EVEN PRIOR TO FLOOD. YET TO DATE
ONLY DOLS. 25,000. WE CAN AND MUST DO MORE, AND DEPT.
URGED TO TAKE FURTHER ACTION. IF NECESSARY CONGRESS
SHOULD MAKE ADDITIONAL FUNDS AVAILABLE. KISSINGER
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